

hir first strengthe. And, right by ensaum-
ple as the sonne is hid whan the sterres ben
clustred (that is to seyn, whan sterres ben
covered with cloudes) by a swifte winde
that highte Chorus, & that the firmament
stant derked by wete ploungy cloudes, &
that the sterres nat apperen upon hevne,
so that the night semeth sprad upon
erthe: yif thanne the wind that highte Bo-
rias, ysent out of the caves of the contree
of Trace, beteth this night (that is to seyn,
chaseth it away), & discovereth the closed
day: than shyneth Phebus yshaken with
sodein light, and smyteth with his bemes
in merveling eye.

Prose III.

Faud aliter tristicie nebulis dissolutis.

NOW so, & nonoth-
er wyse, the cloudes
of sorwe dissolved
and don away, I took
hevne, and receiv-
ede minde to know-
en the face of my
fysicien; so that I
sette myn eyen on
hir, & fastned my
lookinge. I beholde my norice Philoso-
phie, in whos houses I hadde conversed
& haunted fro my youthe; & I seide thus:
O thou maistresse of alle vertues, descend-
ed from the sovereyn sete, why artow comen
into this solitarie place of myn exil? Artow
comen for thou art maked coupable with
me of false blames?

QUOD she, my norry, sholde I
forsaken thee now, and sholde I
nat parten with thee, by comune
travaile, the charge that thou hast suffred
for envie of my name? Certes, it nere not
leveful ne sittinge thing to Philosophie,
to leten withouten companye the wey of
him that is innocent. Sholde I thanne re-
doute my blame, & agrysen as though ther
were bifallen a new thing? quasi diceret,
non. for trowestow that Philosophie be
now alderfirst assailed in perils by folk of
wikkede maneres? Have I nat striven with
ful greet stryf, in olde tyme, bifore the age
of my Plato, ayeines the foolhardinesse
of folye? And eek, the same Plato livinge,
his maister Socrates deservede victorie of
unrightful deeth in my presence. The heri-
tage of which Socrates... the heritage is to
seyn the doctrine of the whiche Socrates in
his opinioun of felicitie, that I clepe wele-
fulness... whan that the poeple of Epi-
curiens and Stoiciens and many othre en-
forceden hem to go ravisshe everich man
for his part... that is to seyn, that everich
of hem wolde drawn to the defence of his
opinioun the wordes of Socrates... they,

as in partie of hir preye, todrown me, cry-
inge and debatinge therayens, and coven-
& torenten my clothes that I hadde woven
with myn handes; & with the cloutes that
they hadden araced out of my clothes they
wenten away, weninge that I hadde gon
with hem everydel.

IN whiche Epicuriens and Stoiciens,
for as moche as ther semede some
traces or steppes of myn habite, the
Stoiciens my famuleres, perverted (se-
persequendo) some through the error of
the wikkede or uncunninge multitude of
hem. This is to seyn that, for they semede
philosophes, they weren pursued to the
deeth & slayn. So yif thou hast nat know-
en the exilinge of Anaxogore, ne the empy-
soninge of Socrates, ne the tourments
of Zeno, for they weren straungers: yif
mightestow han knowne the Seneciens
and the Canios and the Sorans, of whiche
folk the renoun is neither over olde ne un-
solempne. The whiche men, nothing elles
ne broughte hem to the deeth but only for
they weren enfourmed of myne maneres,
and semeden most unlyke to the studies
of wikkede folk. And forthy thou oughtest
nat to wondren though that I, in the bitre
see of this lyf, be fordriven with tempestes
blowinge aboute, in the whiche tempestes
this is my most purpos, that is to seyn,
to displeen to wikkede men. Of whiche
shrewes, at be the ost never so greet, it is
to dispyse; for it nis governed with no
leder of resoun, but it is ravisshe only by
fletinge error foltyly and lightly. And if
they somtyme, makinge an ost ayeins us,
assaille us as strenger, our leder draweth
togidere his riches into his tour, & they
ben ententif aboute sarpulers or sachelis
unprofitable for to taken. But we that ben
heye aboven, siker fro alle tumulte & wode
noise, warnestored and enclosed in swich
a palis, whider as that chateringe or any-
inge folye ne may nat atayne, we scome
swiche ravineres and henteres of foulest
thinges.

Metre IV.

Quisquis composito serenus evo.

HOSO it be that is cleer of
vertu, sad, & wel ordnat of
livinge, that hath put under
foot the proude werdes, and
looketh upright upon either
fortune, he may hold his chere
undiscomfited. The rage ne the manaces
of the see, commoevinge or chasing up-
ward hete fro the botme, ne shal not moore
that man; ne the unstable mountaigne
that highte Vesevus, that wrytheth out
through his brokene chiminees smokinge

fyres. Ne the wey of thonder leit, that is
wont to smyten heye toures, ne shal nat
moore that man. Wherto thanne, owrecc-
drede ye tirauntes that ben wode and
felonous withoute any strengthe? Hope
after nothing, ne drede nat; & so shaltow
desarmen the ire of thilke unmyghty ti-
raunt. But whoso that, quakinge, dredeth
or desireth thing that nis nat stable of his
righte, that man that sodoth hath cast away
his sheld & is remoeved fro his place, and
enlacceth him in the cheyne with the which
he may ben drawn.

Prose IV.

Sentient, inquit, hec.

ELESTOM, quod
she, these thinges,
& entren they aught
in thy corage? Artow
lyke an asse to the
harpe? Why wepe-
stow teres? Yif thou
abydest after help
of thy leche, thee bi-
hoveth discovere thy wounde.

THOU I, that hadde gadered strengthe
in my corage, answered and seide:
And nedeth it yit, quod I, of rehers-
inge or of amonicioun; and sheweth it nat
ynough by himself the sharpnesse of for-
tune, that wexeth wode ayeins me? Ne
mooreveth it nat thee to seen the face or the
manere of this place (i. prisoun)? Is this
the librarie whiche that thou haddest chos-
en for a right certain sete to thee in myn
house, theas thou desputedest ofte with
me of the sciences of thinges touchinge
divinitee and touchinge mankind? Was
thanne myn habite swich as it is now? Was
than my face or my chere swiche as now
(quasi diceret, non), whan I soughte with
thee secrets of nature, whan thou enform-
edest my maneres and the resoun of alle
my lyf to the ensauple of the ordre of
hevne? Is nat this the guerdoun that Ire-
ferre to thee, to whom I have be obeisaunt?
Certes, thou confermedest, by the mouth
of Plato, this sentence, that is to seyn,
that comune thinges or comunalties wer-
en blisful, yif they that hadden studied al
fully to wisdom governeden thilke thing-
es, or elles yif it so bifille that the govern-
ures of comunalties studieden to geten
wisdom.

THOU seidest eek, by the mouth of
the same Plato, that it was a neces-
sarie cause, wyse men to taken and
desire the governaunce of comune thinges,
for that the governements of citees, yleft
in the handes of felonous tormentours
citizenes, ne sholden nat bringe in pestilence

& destruccioun to gode folk. And therfor
I, folwinge thilke auctoritee (sc. Platonis),
desired to putten forth in execucioun and
in acte of comune administracioun thilke
thinges that I hadde lerned of thee among
my secree resting-whyles. Thou, and God
that putte thee in the thoughtes of wyse
folk, ben knowinge with me, that nothing
ne broughte me to maistrie or dignitee, but
the comune studie of alle goodnesse. And
therof comth it that bitwixen wikked folk
and me han ben grevous discordes, that ne
mighten ben releesed by preyeres; for this
liberte hath the freedom of conscience,
that the wratthe of more mighty folk hath
alwey ben despyssed of me for savacioun of
right.

DOW ofte have I resisted and with-
stonde thilke man that highte
Conigaste, that made alwey as-
sautes ayeins the prospre fortunes of pore
feble folk? How ofte eek have I put of or cast
out him, Trigwille, provost of the kinges
house, bothe of the wronges that he hadde
bigunne to don, and eek fully performed?
How ofte have I covered & defended by the
auctoritee of me, put ayeins perils... that
is to seyn, put myn auctoritee in peril for...
the wretched pore folk, that the covetyse
of straungeres unpunished tourmenten
alwey with misseysses & grevaunces out
of noubre? Never man ne drow me yit fro
right to wronge. Whan I say the fortunes
and the riches of the poeple of the pro-
vinces ben harmed or amenused, outhur by
priveravynes or by comune tributes or ca-
riages, as sory was I as they that suffred
en the harm.

Glossa. Whan that Theodoric, the king of
Gothes, in a dere yere, hadde hise gerner-
ful of corn, and comaunded that no man
ne sholde byen no corn til his corn were
sold, & that at a grevous dere prys, Boece
withstood that ordinaunce, and overcom
it, knowinge al this the king himself.

Textus.

WHAN it was in the soure hungry
tyme, ther was establissed or
cryed grevous and implitable co-
empcioun, that men sayen wel it sholde
greetly turmenten & endamagen al the pro-
vince of Campaigne, I took stryf ayeins
the provost of the pretorie for comune pro-
fit. And, the king knowinge of it, I overcom
it, so that the coempcioun ne was not axed
ne took effect.

Glossa. Coempcioun, that is to seyn, com-
une achat or bying togidere, that were es-
tablissed upon the poeple by swiche a
manere imposicioun, as whoso boughte
a bussel corn, he moste yewe the king the
fifte part.

